

Jim Doyle
Governor

Roberta Gassman
Secretary



State of Wisconsin

Department of Workforce Development

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Doyle Administration Awards \$110,000 to Eau Claire, Chippewa and Dunn Child Care Centers

Builds on Governor's Initiative to Make Child Care Tax Deductible

Eau Claire - Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman announced today that DWD is awarding \$110,000 in Community Child Care Initiative grants to organizations in Eau Claire, Chippewa and Dunn Counties as part of Governor Jim Doyle's *KidsFirst* Initiative.

"The quality of care and learning opportunities that our kids receive at an early age is directly related to their development and ability to do well in school," Governor Doyle said. "This investment in our children and families through stronger child care programs will last a lifetime."

In 2006, DWD will be awarding a total of \$2.5 million statewide in Community Child Care Initiative grants to counties, tribes, municipalities, public school districts, and Wisconsin Technical College districts. The grants will be used to improve the quality, supply and accessibility of child care throughout Wisconsin. Recipients must match the grant funds which may be towards a variety of activities to improve child care quality, such as:

- Helping parents make informed choices about selecting child care;
- Educating the general public;
- Increasing opportunities for children with disabilities in child care settings;
- Local collaborative planning to improve early child care and education services;
- Develop a community plan for meeting child care needs related to 4-year old kindergarten for working families; or
- Offering child care for children documented to be receiving or in need of protective services.

Secretary Gassman made the following grant announcements today at an Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce meeting today, after touring the Children's' Secret Garden and Luther Midelfort Child Development Centers in Eau Claire:

Eau Claire County Department of Human Services	\$19,862
Dunn County Human Services	\$4,203
Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District	\$20,434
Chippewa Valley Technical College	\$64,697
Menomonie Area School District	\$1,054

"We are committed to the children and families in our state – from promoting and improving early childhood education, to giving our parents a tax break on paying for child care," said Secretary Gassman.

Governor Doyle has proposed a new tax deduction that will allow parents to deduct up to \$3,000 for child care expenses for one child, and up to \$6,000 for two or more children. This new tax benefit will save nearly \$400 for a family with two children in child care. According to the National Association of Child Care Research and Referrals Agency, there are 253,335 children in Wisconsin under the age of six that have either both parents working or are from a single parent household where the parent works.

For more information regarding DWD's child care programs, see DWD's website at <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/programs/childcare/grants/default.htm> and DWD's home page at <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov>.

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